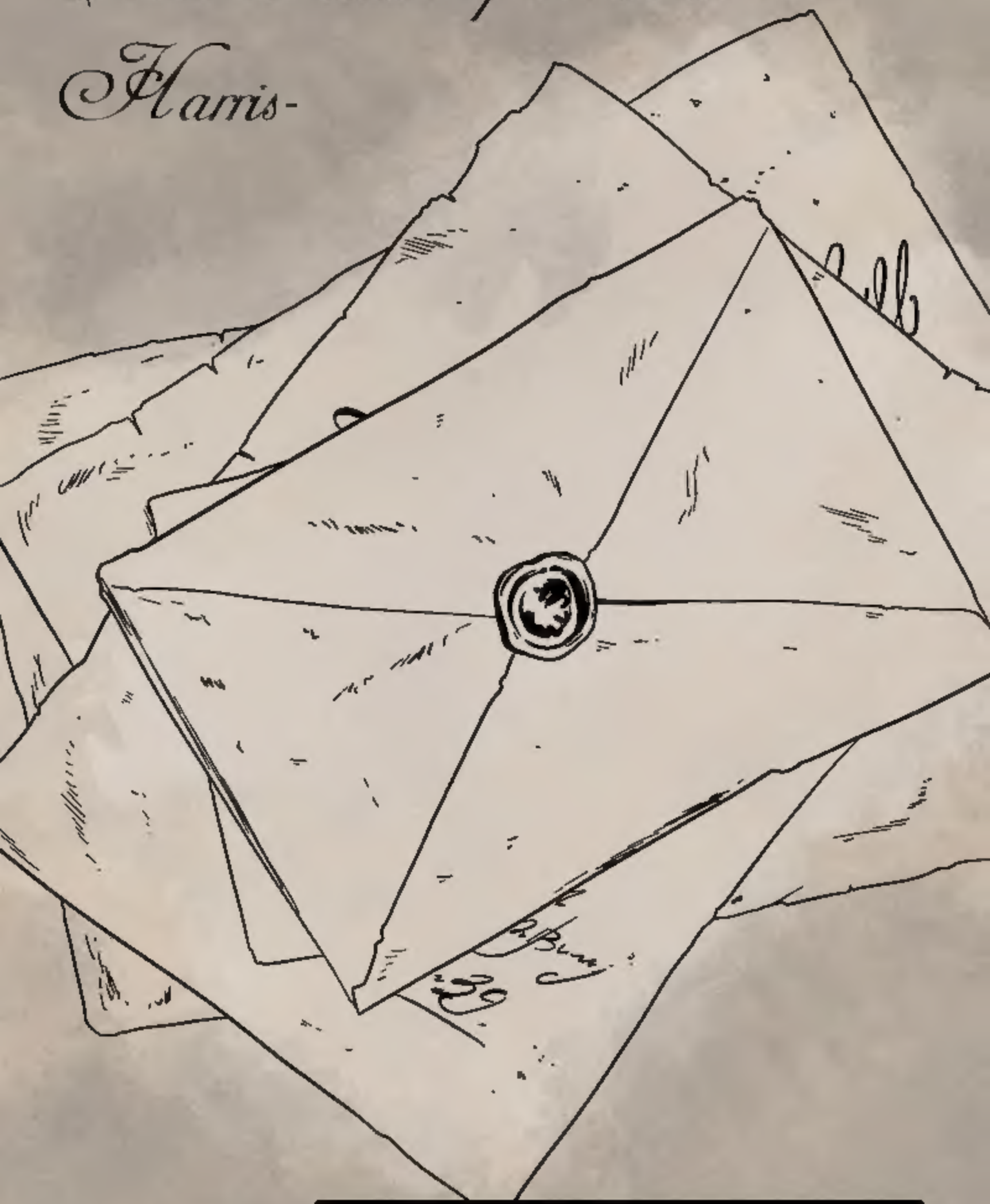
From the letters of Charles Harris-



My dear Samuel...

remember i.

It has been a little over five months since we last met, and is my hope that this letter finds you well.

It is within this month of April in the year of our Lord, that I have hastily returned with greatest expectations to oversee the completion of my country estate, the building of which was for no small expense,

having diverted a goodly sum of my time and income during the last three years to its final construction.

The winter has been a most pressing and harsh one, and it was with dearest relief that I spied the branches turning at last from their sickly bareness to a green and renewed state.

Are we already old men, Sam?

For even now we grow intolerant of freezing weather and wait for the days to lengthen into summer.

I have caused all of my household, my wife and children to be relocated here, away from the troubles and concerns of the great cities, in the hopes that future days will be pleasantly spent in this idyllic setting.

My wife Anna,

being of poor constitution and having need of quiet and rest during convales-
cence after an illness, has

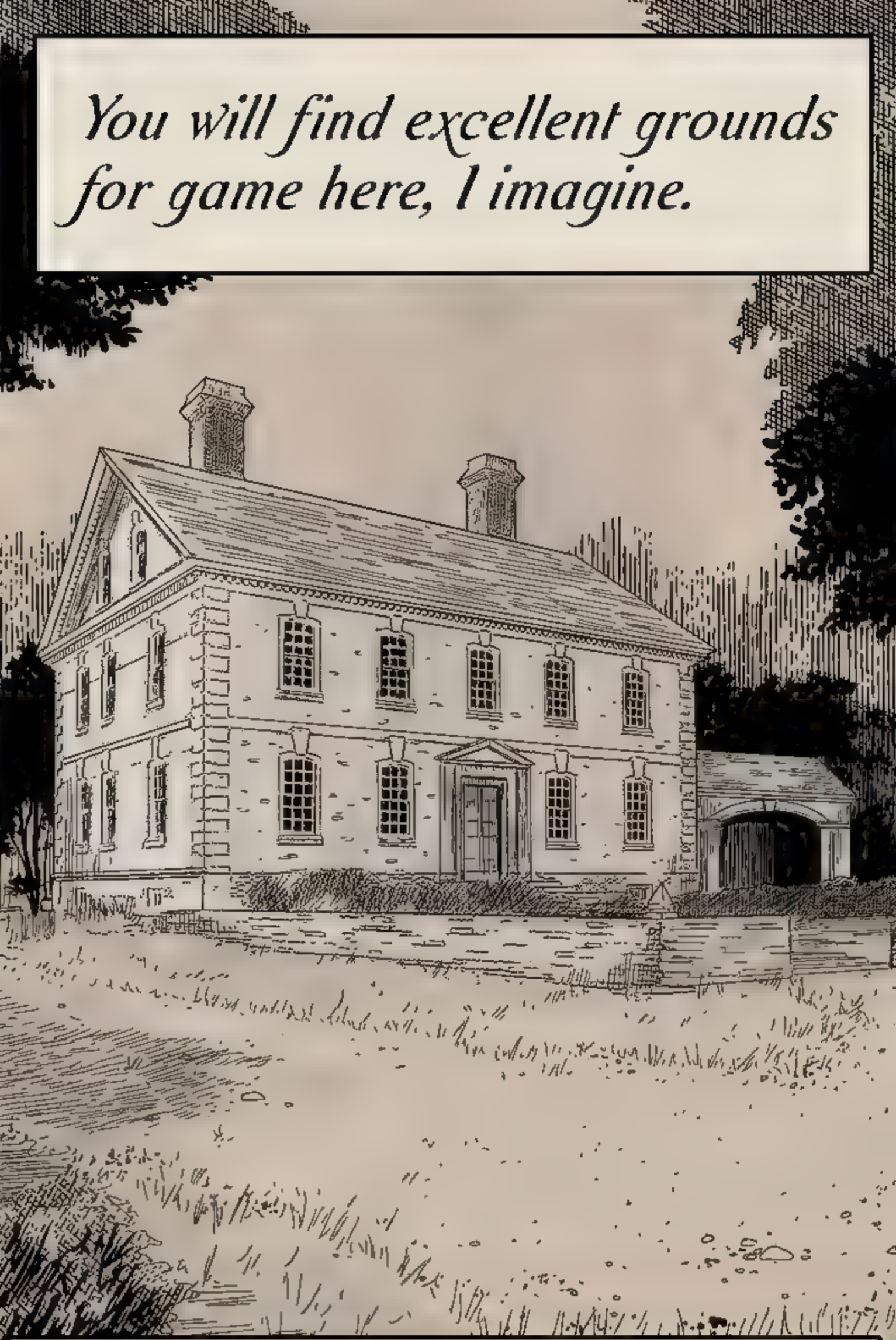
made the hastening of the main house's completion all the more vital.

I have every hope she will be in better spirits within the month.

In the meanwhile, I offer you

a most sincere welcome to join us
at any time in our new home, and
to bring Sara and the children.

You will find excellent grounds for game here, I imagine.



The estate resides on a most picturesque parcel of land, towards the southern edge of Stagtown, and shares its borders with both prodigious forest and neighbours of amiable and most social temperament, the latter of which have already extended invitations to their homes upon our arrival.

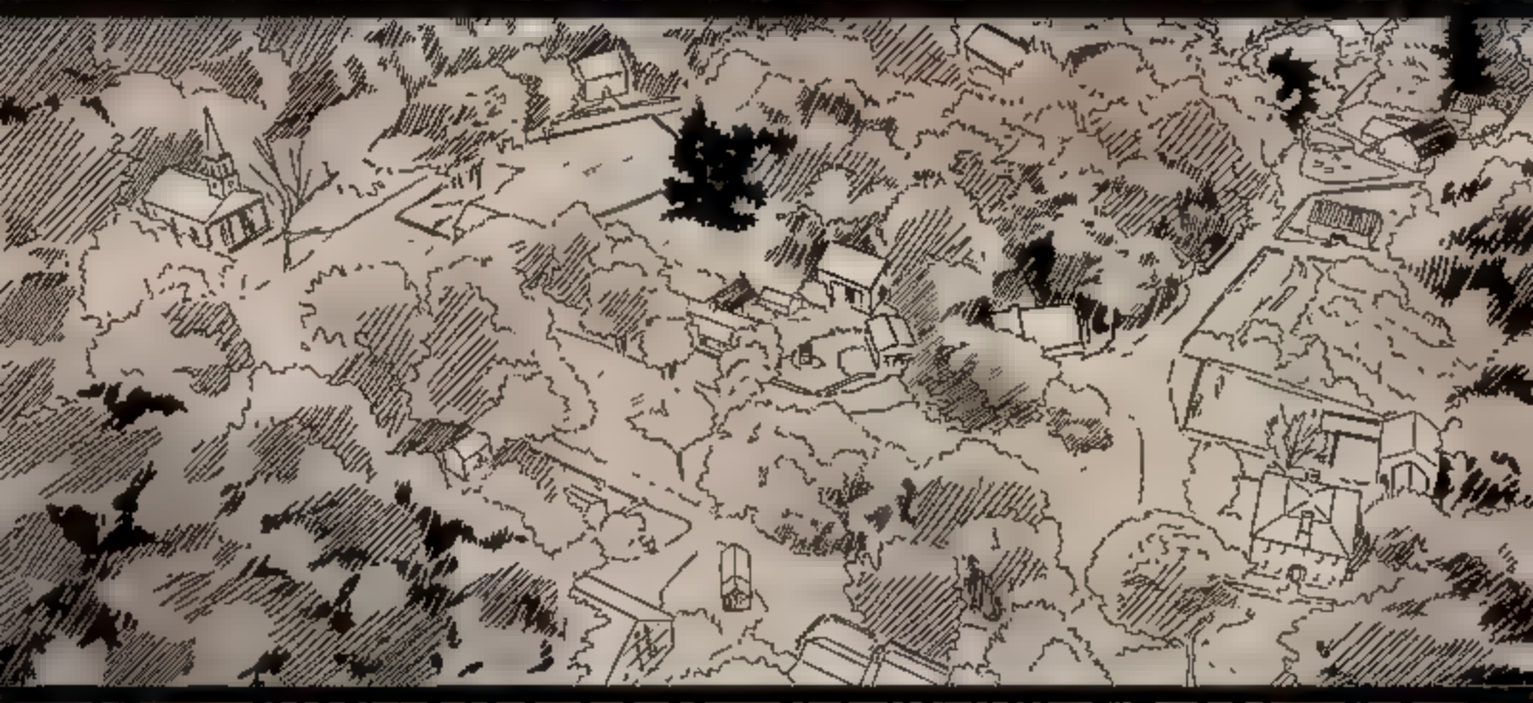
It is my belief that the family will do well in these surroundings,

for the people here seem of a pious and honest nature.

With God's natural beauties at our backs and the friendship of the townsfolk before us, I

predict a year spent in such simple peace will do wonders for the family as a whole.

The town itself is markedly distant from others, being but a small thing situated among the mountains, far from the sounds and sights of Philadelphia.



News travels but slowly, and much is made of any newcom-

habit of all quaint little towns.

Though there is always talk of iron ore to be found in this region,

the speculations and seekers have yet to travel south from the noted Durham iron-works.

As such, Stagtown remains a quiet village, untroubled by the outside world, bearing a mix of peoples from many classes and beliefs.

What joy it is, when one leaves behind the quarrelsome natures and machinations of political and ambitious people!

To remove oneself to a place of simple cares and concerns, honest labour and goodwill. It is a desperate relief to one's nerves, and indeed one's own soul.

I perceive the people here are of that unassuming and welcoming nature for which these older settlements are known, and it warms my heart to go among them.

The Protestant rubs shoulders with the Catholic on the street, to no offence or violence, in either word or body.

It has been a difficult year for all of us.

Having been kept abroad for so long, I hardly recognize my children for their height,

though their gaiety and devotion has not waned.

They flew into my arms the moment I stepped off the carriage, little faces wreathed in smiles and pouring questions.

My God! But John has become nearly a man in that short time! His head threatens to brush my shoulder even now.

True to my promises, I brought many things back from my travels in Europe...

...fine linens and china for Anna, toys and clothing for the children,

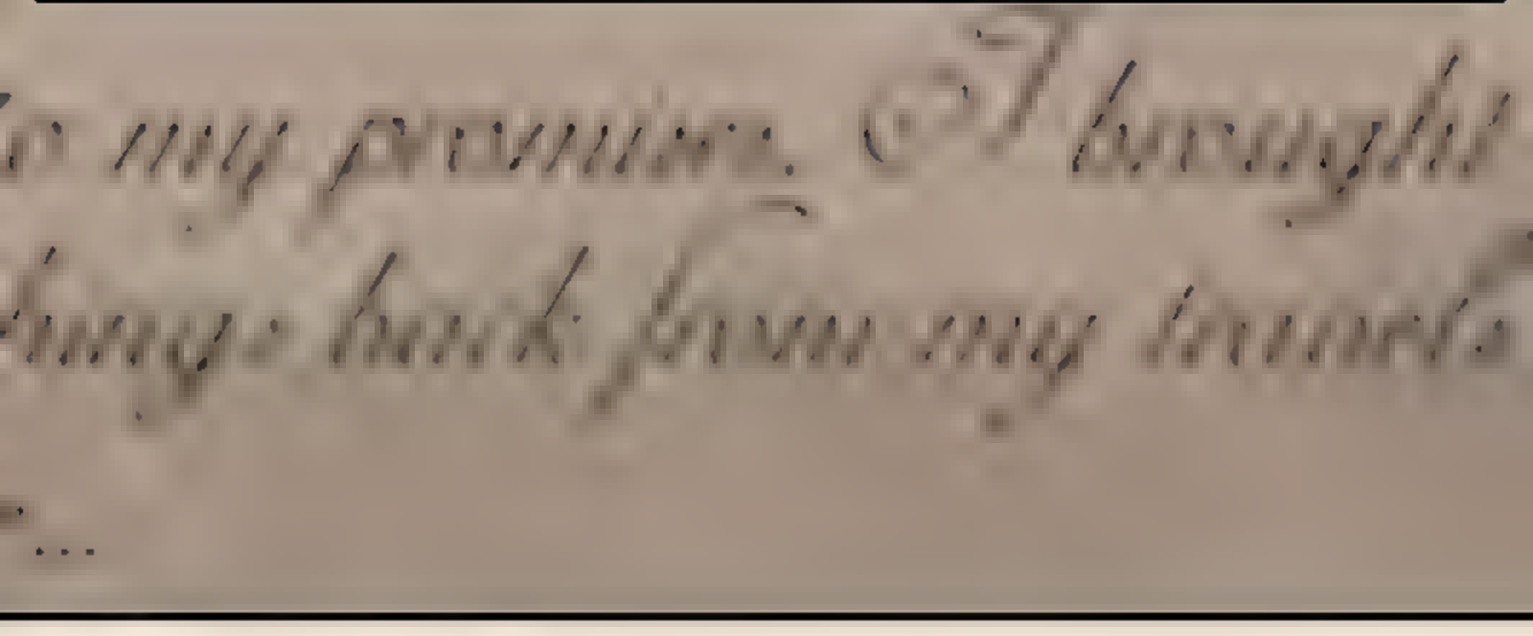
(though I daresay much will

have to be adjusted for how they have grown)

as well as quite a few furnish-ings to complete the new estate.

Everything has been delivered and the place now begins to feel as a home should.

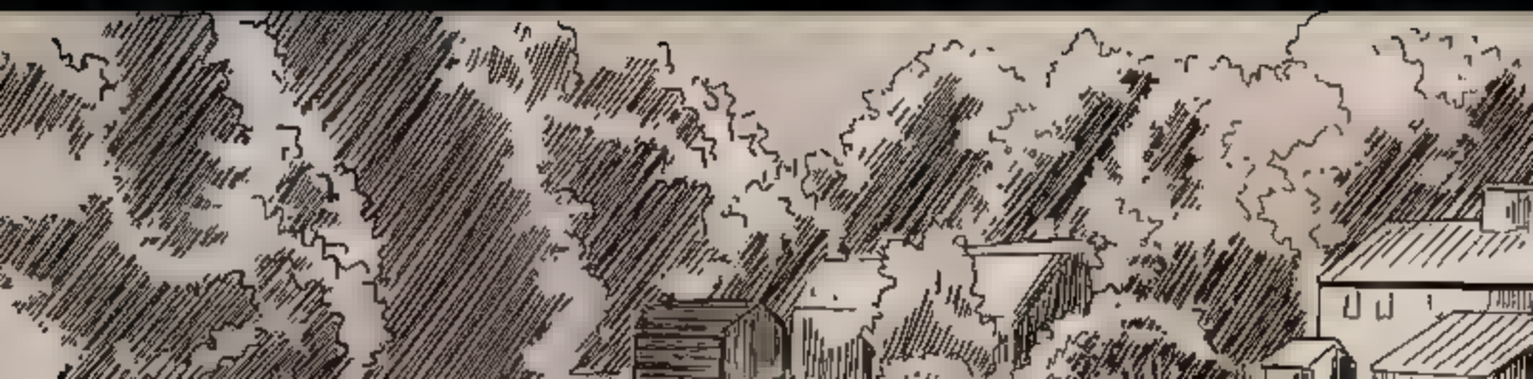
We have taken well to this place, I feel yet that we could do more to be in the favour of the local society.



Though I have only good words for our new neighbours in Stag-town, the fact remains that many are fellows of the Quaker settle-

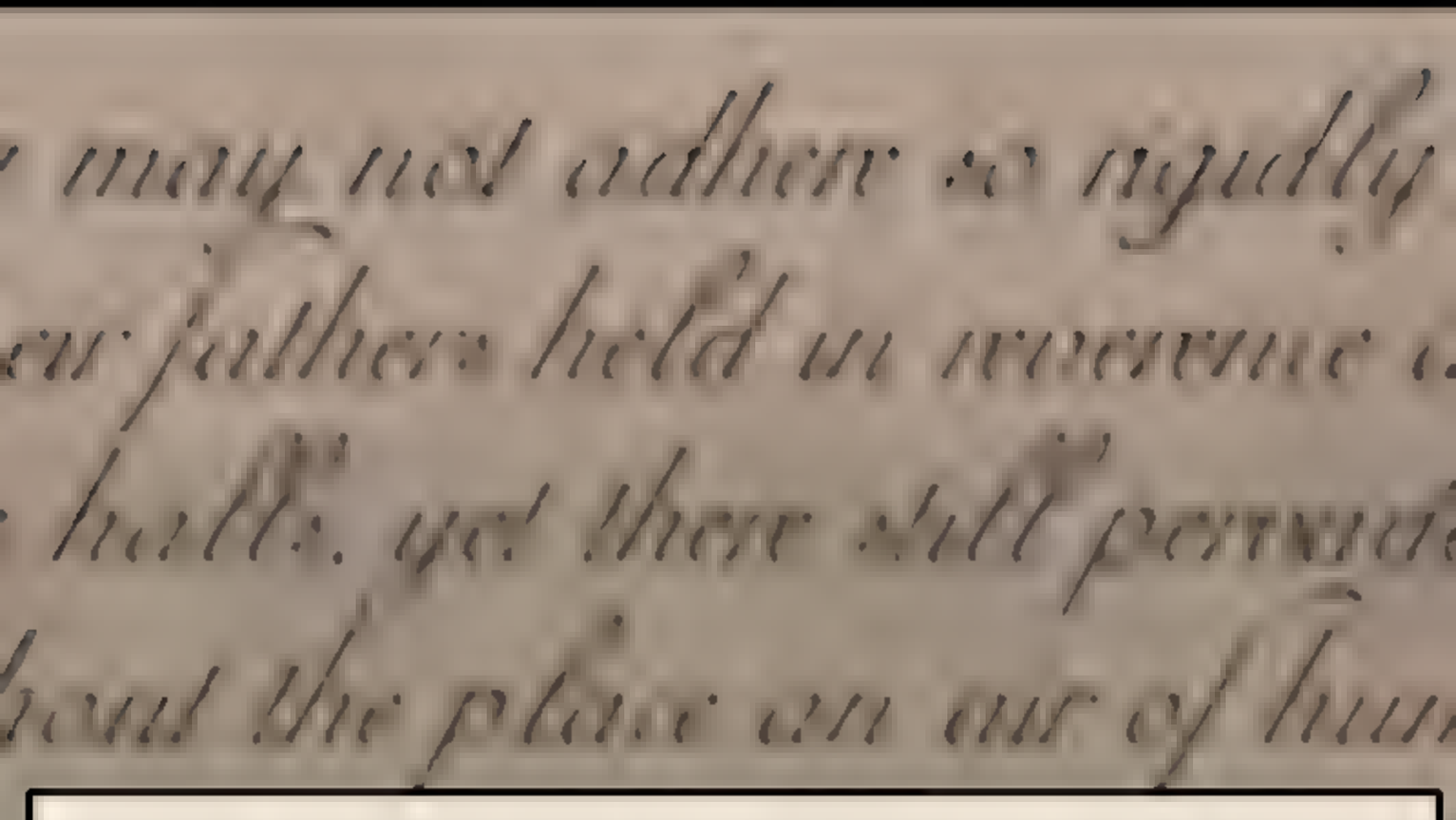
ments and perhaps overly-given to simplicity and plainness in the name of piety, though I understand they are not strictly of that denomination.

They may not adhere so rigidly to the old rules their fathers held in reverence at the meeting halls, yet there still pervades throughout the place an air of humility and conservative taste.



You know Sam, that I am not a man concerned with the fashions of the day, nor given to ostentatious display, but nonetheless it feels prudent to match the sentiments of this place and give the people no undue cause to look upon my family as a house removing themselves from what they

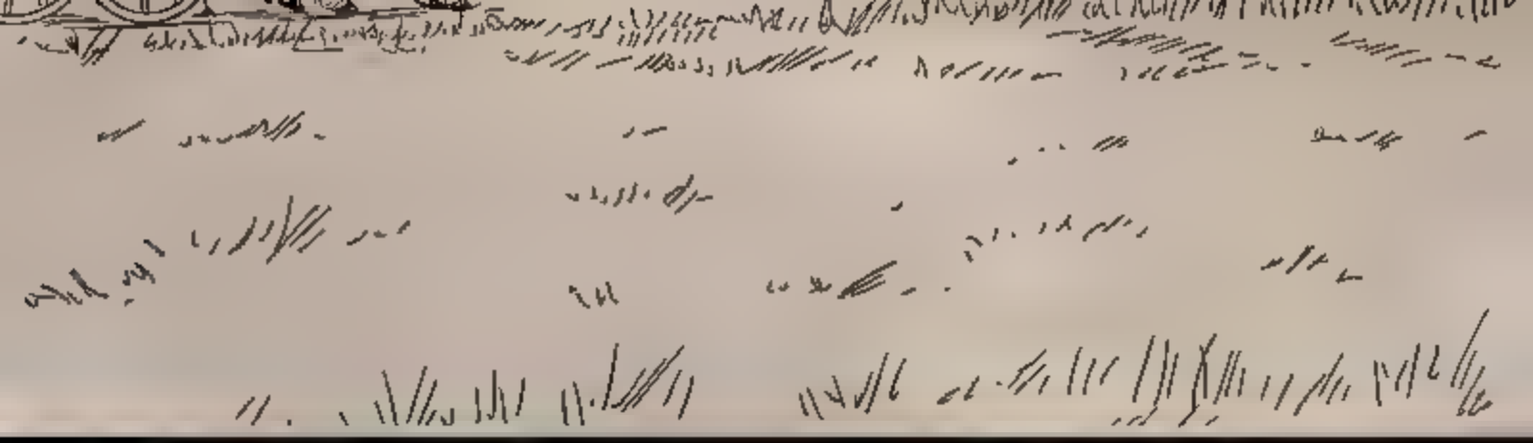
see as people of lower means.



For what is there to be gained by putting on airs, anyway? It would be entirely the opposite of all I mean to achieve by coming here.

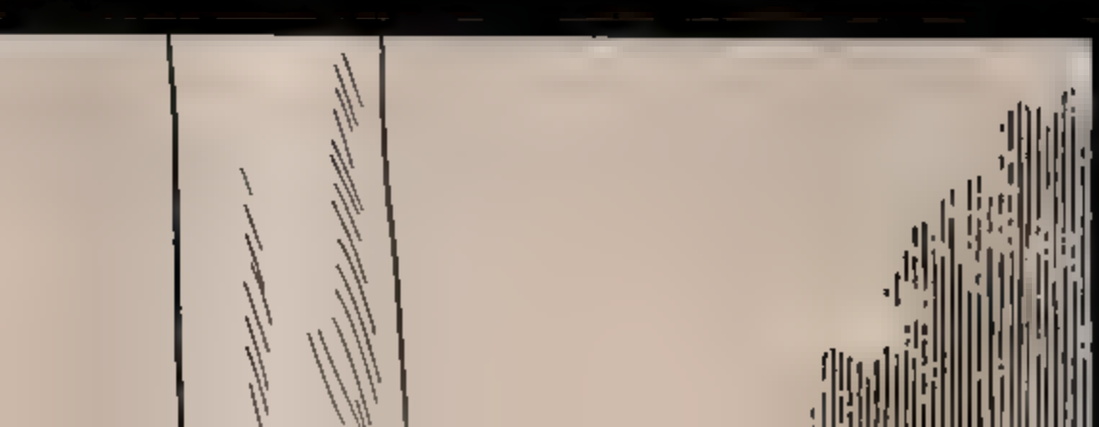
In doing 'as the Romans do,'

so to speak, I have advised Anna to keep our household to a modest appearance, bearing no lavish spectacles of dress or carriage down into the town itself.



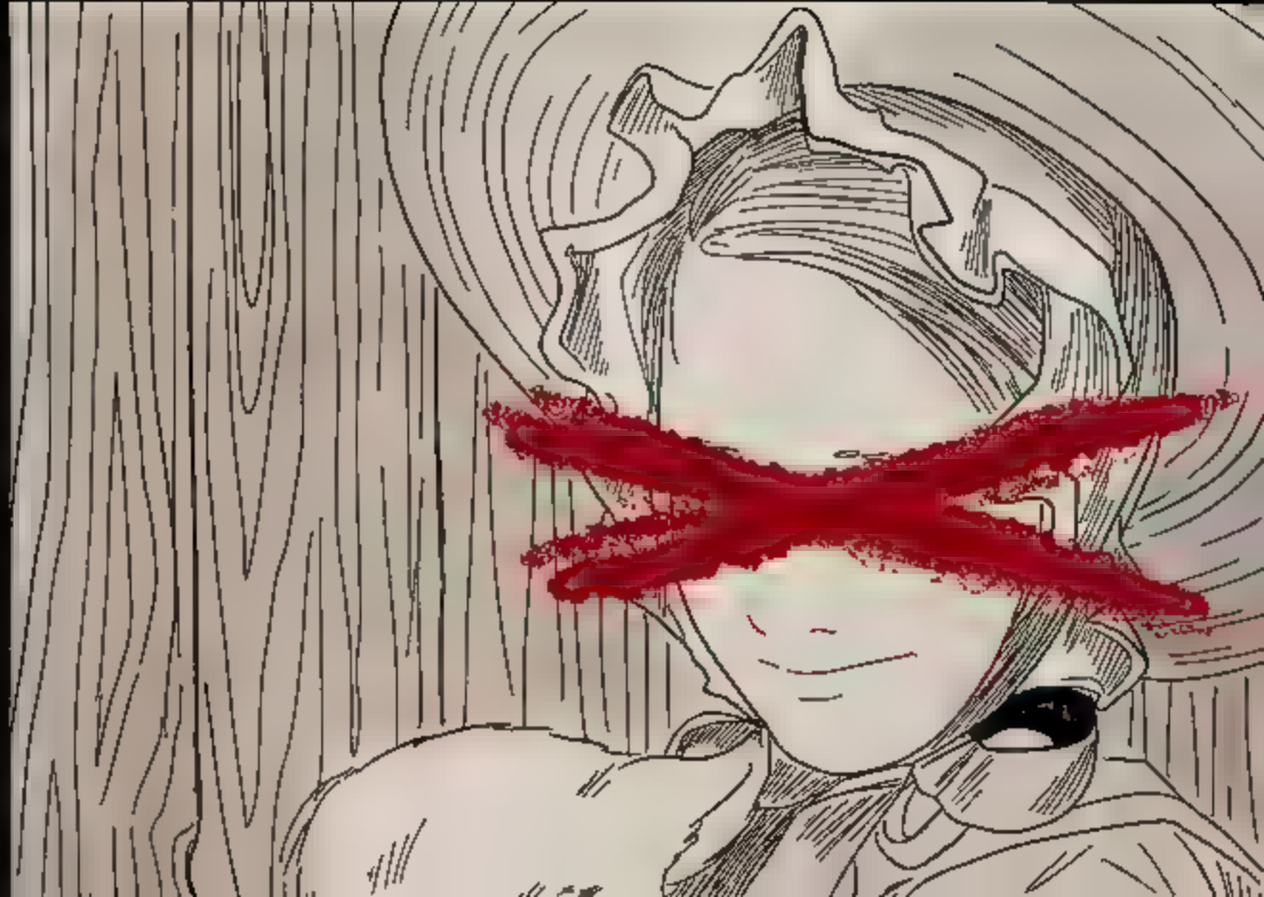
We go to no great pains in making such concessions, and in return we gain much good will from the town.

I have also given permit to the locals to hunt freely upon our grounds as they may, during the season. There are those whose livelihood depends on it far more than my own, and the offer has been accepted with much gratitude.



A deer or two is but a small price to pay for the trust of one's fellow man.

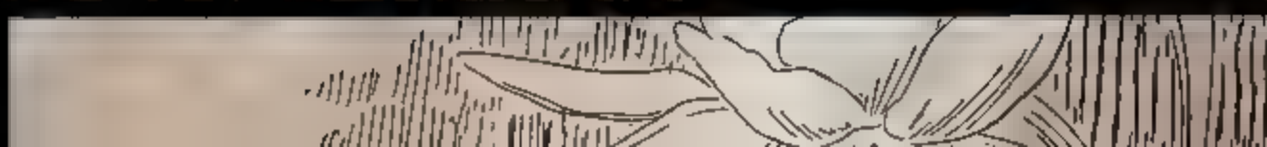
I will say that, though they keep to their customs and go about in rather somber clothes, with little ornamentation to their homes, the townfolk bear no ill judgment or look askance at my own family and its ways.



Bless them, for they are a most kindhearted people, who place peace and friendship above all of Man's best accomplishments.

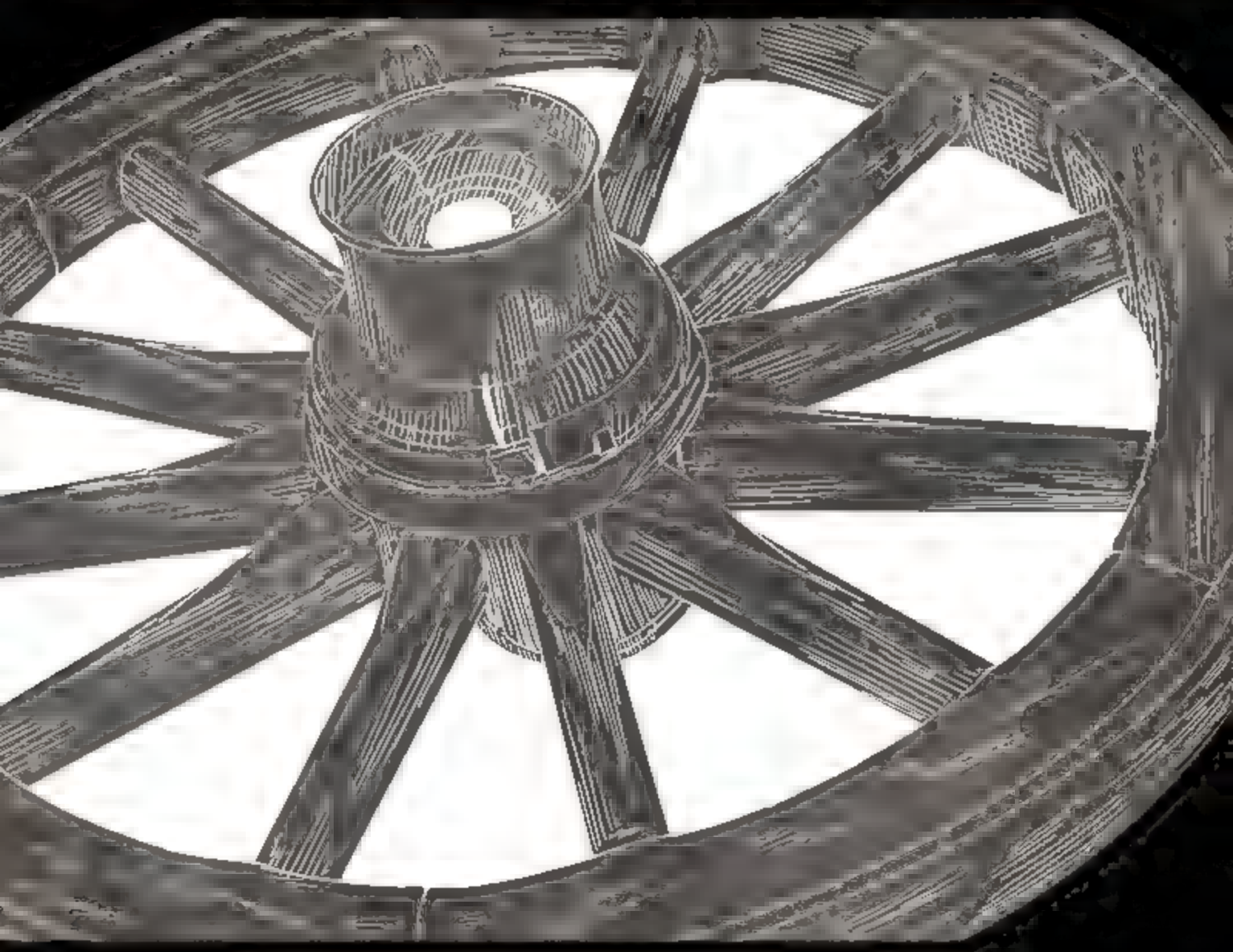
It was when we were first out and about, greeting those who lived closest to the estate,

that I chanced upon an idea which would certainly allow me to repay the kindness of our neighbours and embody that spirit of acceptance which has been so gratefully appreciated by my family.



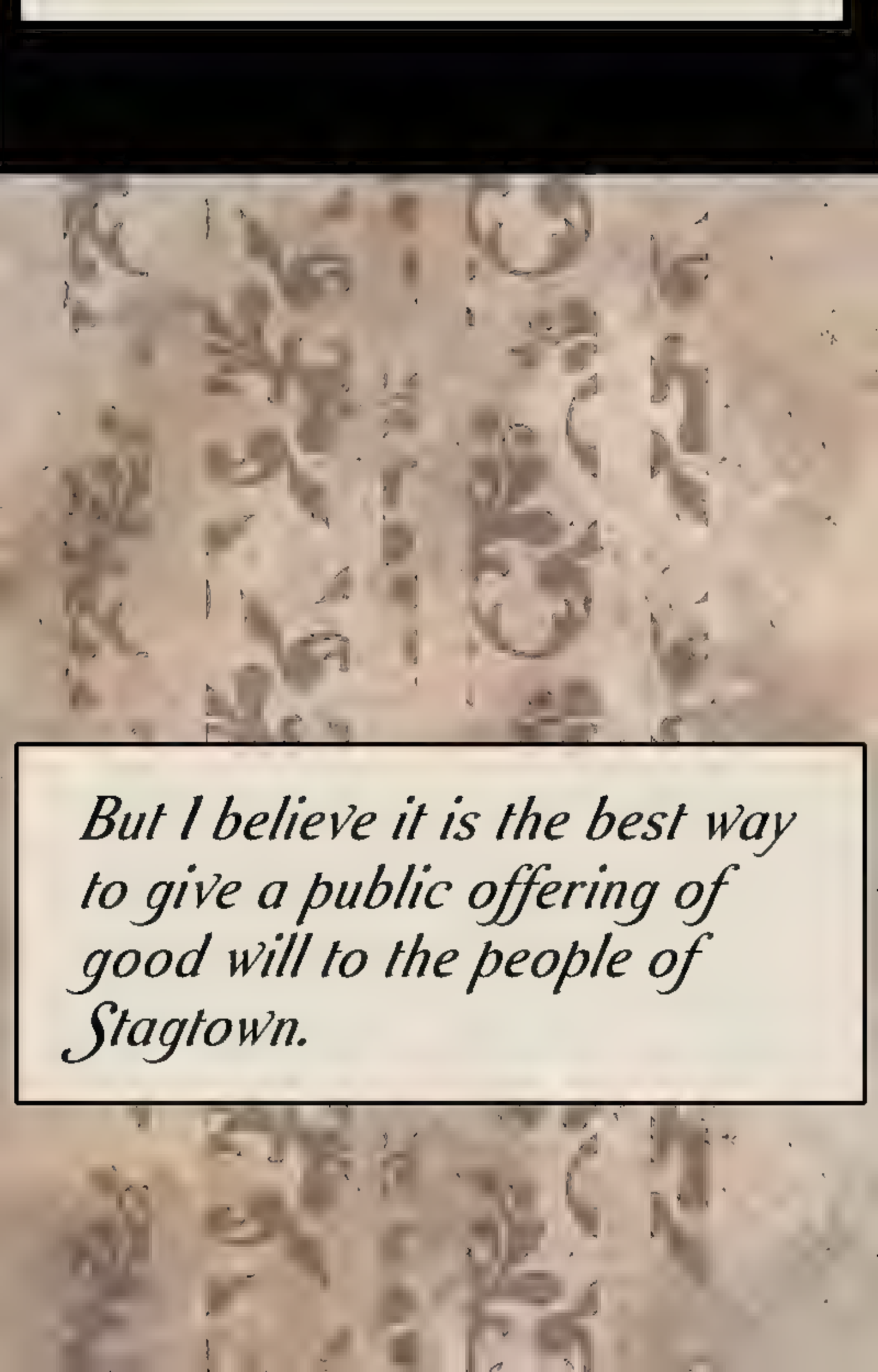
As the children have pleaded for the days of Summer revelry to which they were accustomed, and in the spirit of wishing to bear a gift of friendly charity,

I mean to invite the town to a large party near the estate, for an afternoon and evening of amusements, two months hence.



Already I have begun to make the necessary arrangements for this and employed several men to clear a space out of doors on the grounds.

I know Sam, that you will doubtless ask why I should wish to create a spectacle for those who are wont to shy away from such a thing!


But I believe it is the best way to give a public offering of good will to the people of Stagtown.

So long as it is of a simple design and without too much pomp or contrivance, I believe it will be well-received.

And as Anna has been so long shut up indoors with few callers, it would be most refreshing to her soul to have a day of gaiety and friendly faces around her.

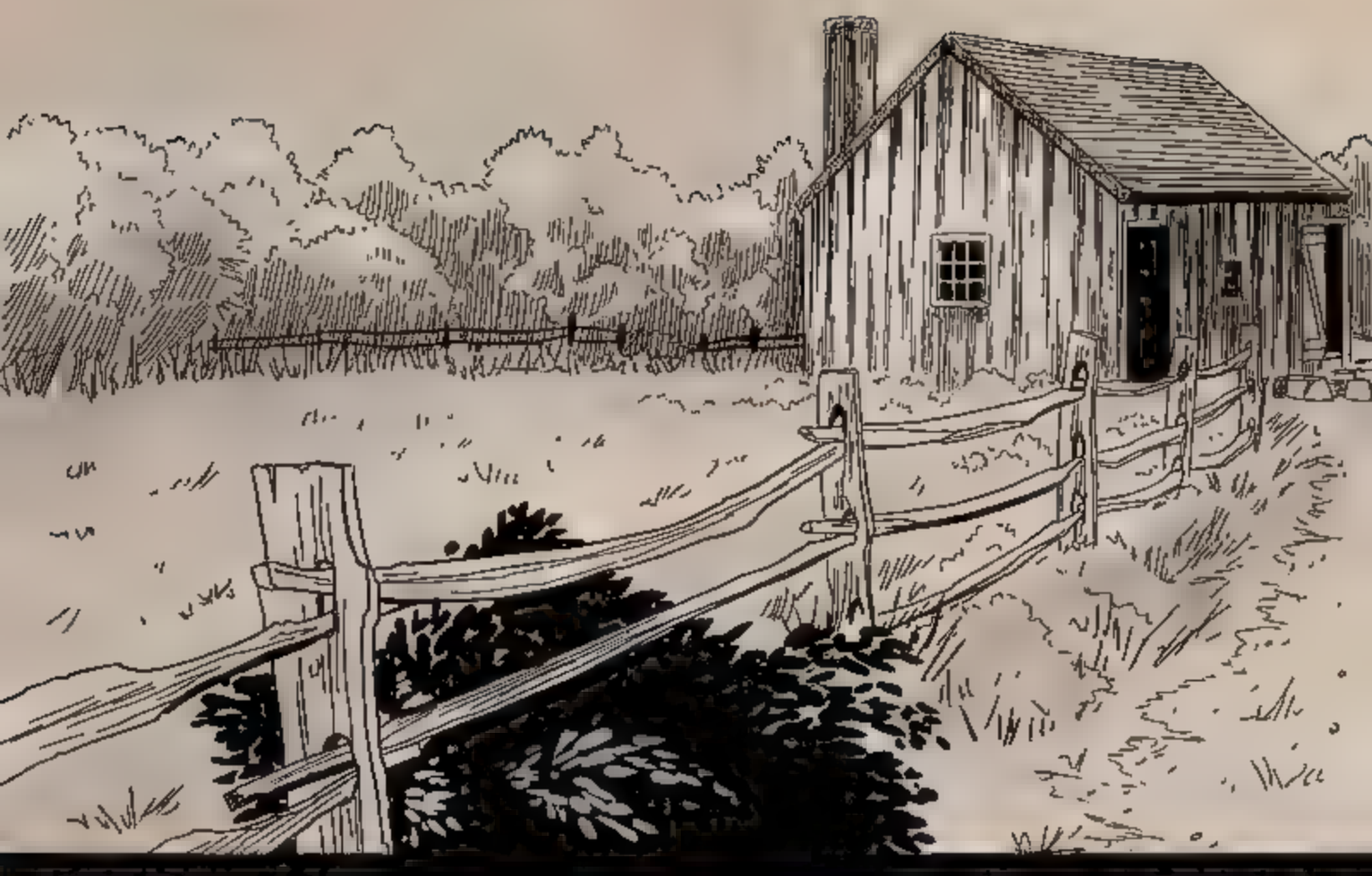
Naturally I extend now your advance invitation! Please know that we are all eager for you and yours to participate. The children wish often to see their cousins once more.

I daresay many of the older and more pious set may hesi-tate to attend,

but there are quite a few who seemed amicable to the idea when I proposed it during a social call to Michael Brennan and his wife. They are well-liked among

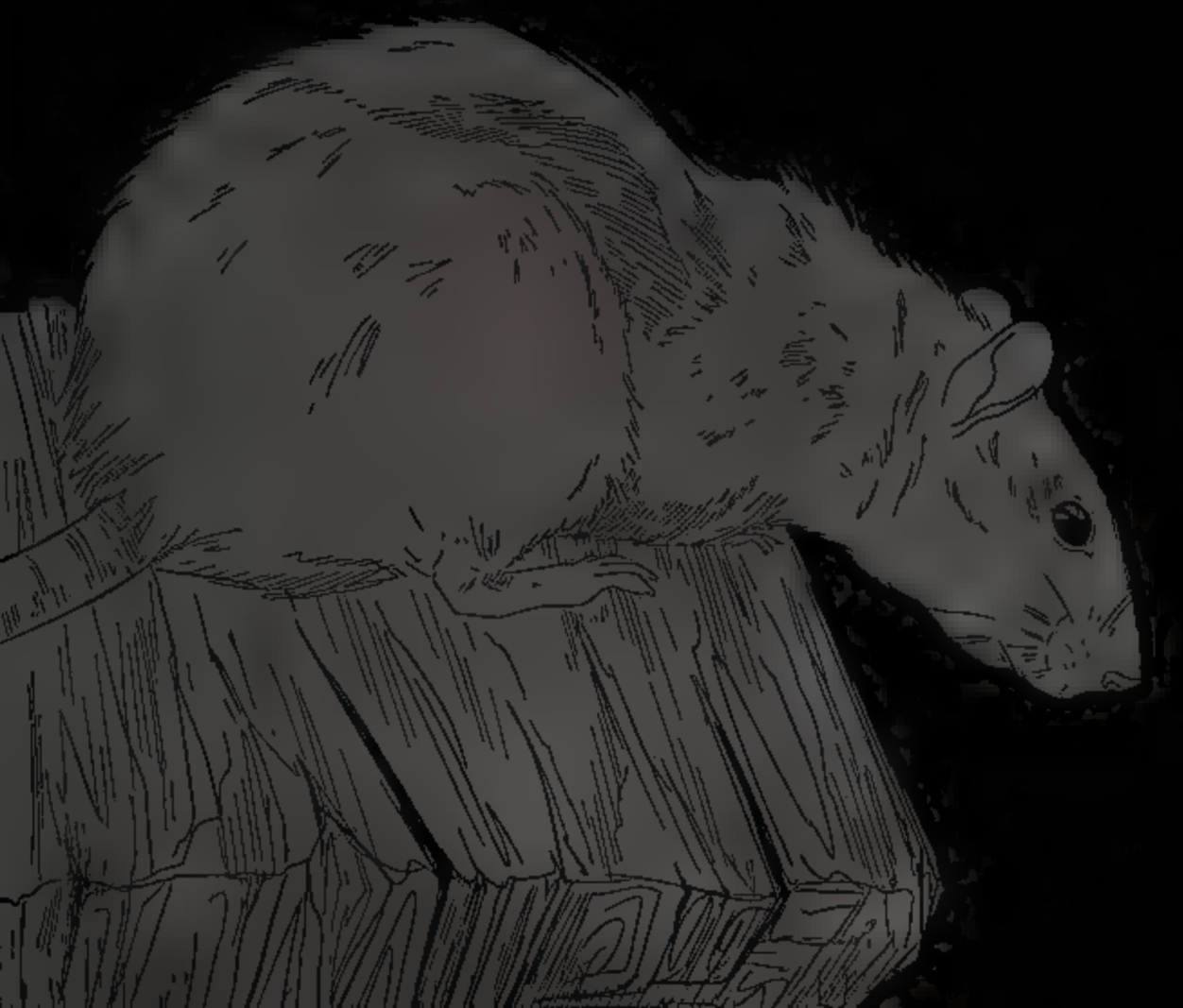
the town and doubt-less will persuade others to fall in with my plans.

Ah, but there is one thing I have not told anyone about just yet!



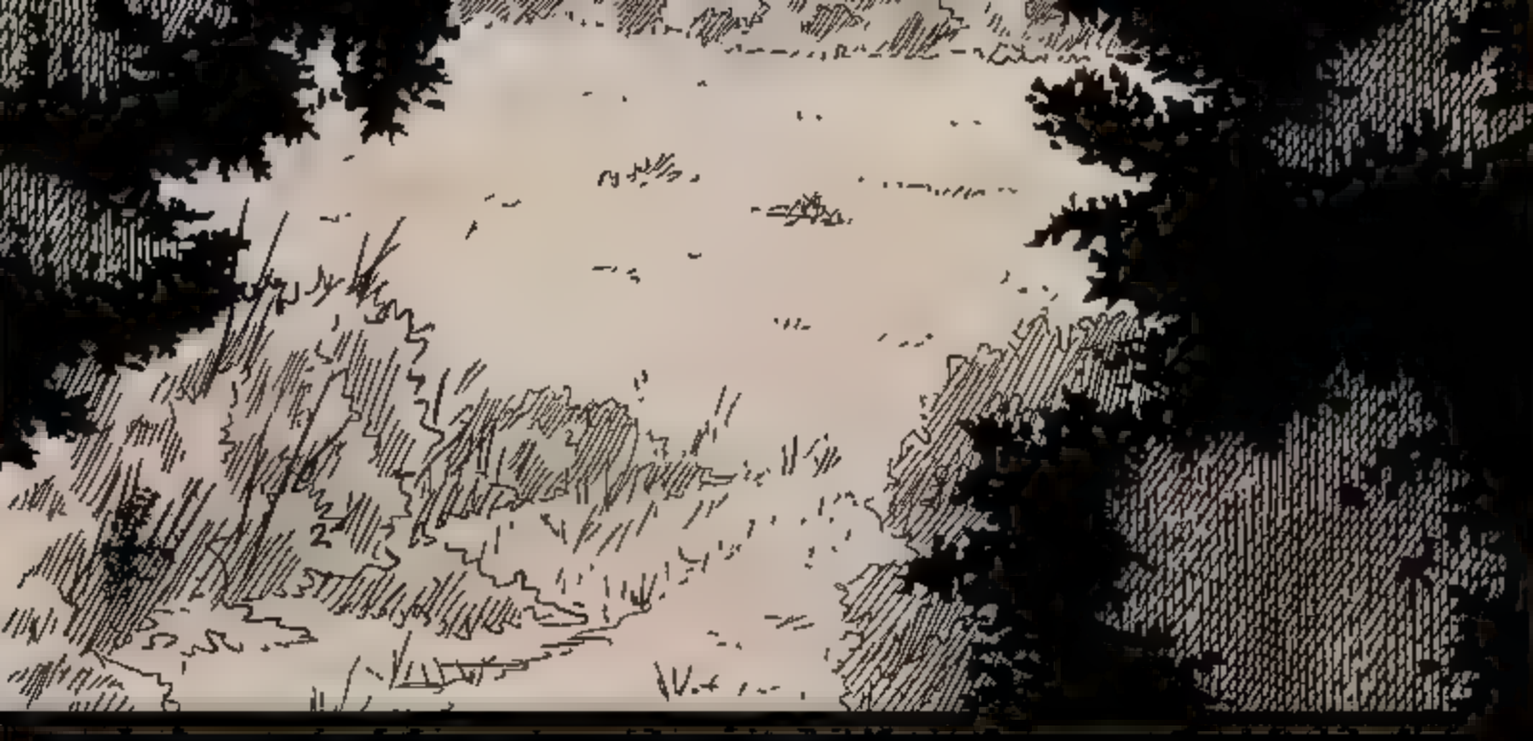
Do you recall when we were lads and that great man from the dark brick house down the road would amuse all the children at May pic-nics and other events?

He had us all in a barrow, three at a time, and would rush us up and down the road, as we fairly shrieked with laughter.



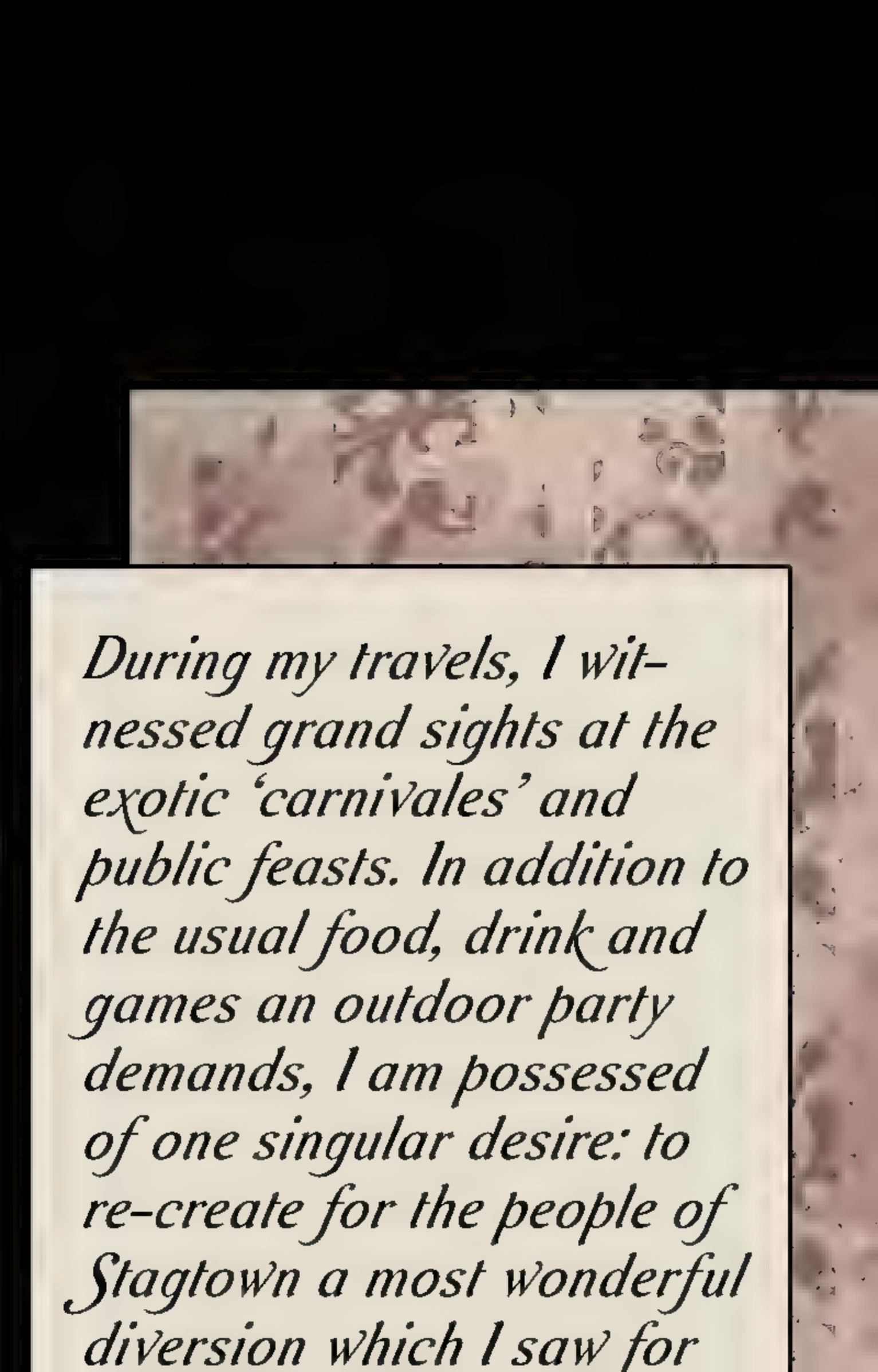
What do you think, Sam?
That I have seen something
far better!

There is a great field on my estate, to which I will set my men clearing and preparing the space.



For I have a purpose in mind for it.

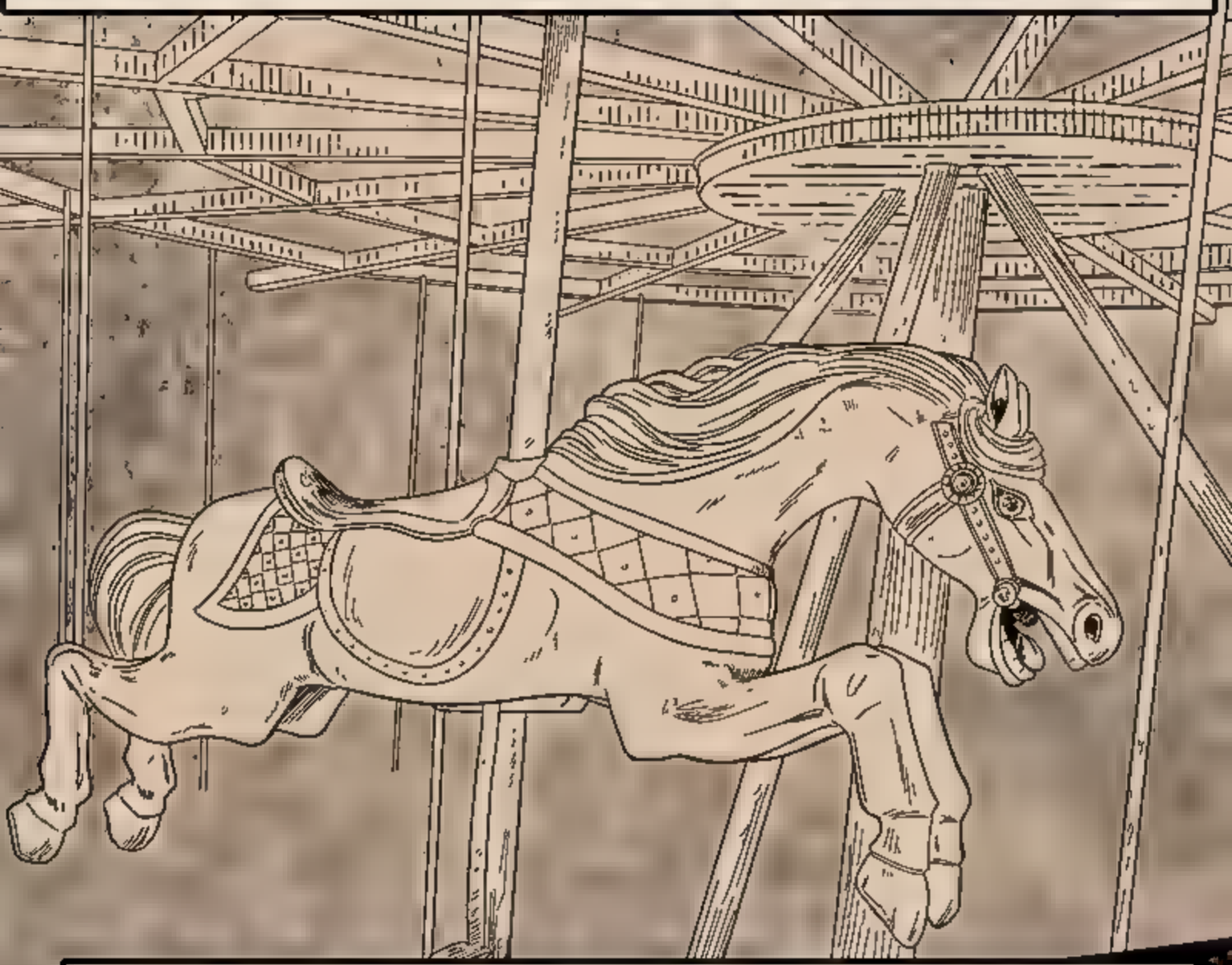
You recall of course the letters I sent you while abroad?



During my travels, I witnessed grand sights at the exotic 'carnivales' and public feasts. In addition to the usual food, drink and games an outdoor party demands, I am possessed of one singular desire: to re-create for the people of Stagtown a most wonderful diversion which I saw for

myself while residing in France.

The funny little foreign man attendant to this spectacle spoke little English, only assuring me that the name of such an invention was 'carosella.'

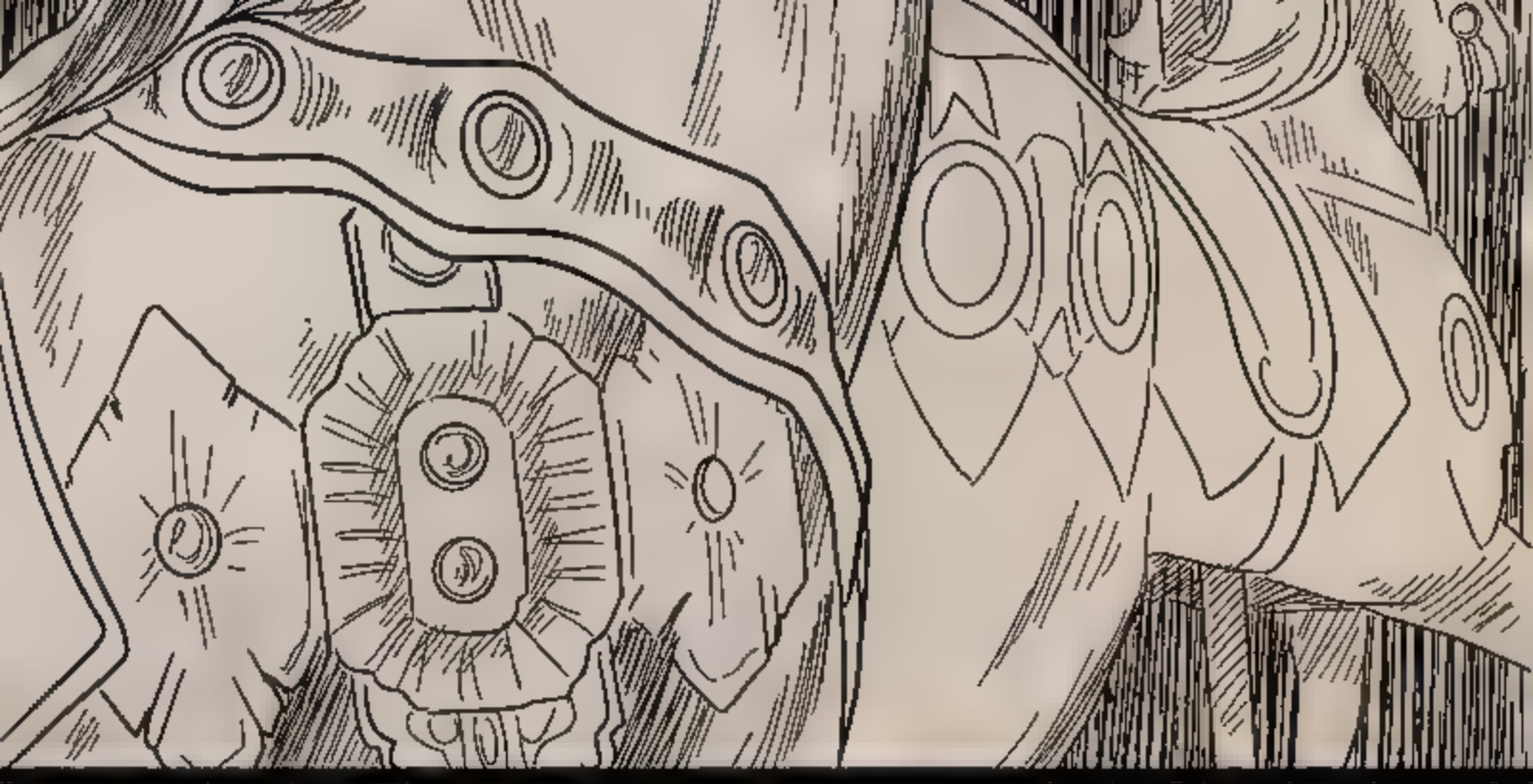


But to my kind hosts the M

But to my mind most like Mr. and Mme Arnaud, this seated roundabout amusement was known as the 'flying horses', or 'carrousel.'

How they did seem to gallop about in a large circle, all painted with gay colours and gilt!

I am not ashamed to say this old man took more than one turn on the roundabout ride, and found it as delightful as if he had been a child again.



Whatever the expense, I must bring something like this amusement to our small town. No doubt a few may shy away from a turn on it, out of pious belief in the Plain devotion that permeates this part of the country...

...but those who do chance it, I think, will be more than pleased.

So please do consider a visit two months hence and bring the children!

Such a spectacle I will bring to life for our little town, and I daresay even the most reticent among them will not be able to resist.

Yours,
Charles.